Illinois Child Care Bureau News

April - June 2020

Dear Provider:

Summer is around the corner which means it is time to review your KidKare calendar to ensure the out of school dates are correct for your school district. The Illinois Child Care Bureau marks all provider calendars as 'school out' from Memorial Day through Labor Day. You may need to adjust the dates on your calendar to reflect the actual summer/ no school schedule. In addition, please remember to mark your calendar as closed (or call the Illinois Child Care Bureau office) if you will not be open on Dr. King's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, President's Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, or the day after Thanksgiving. It will help you avoid a corrective action if a home visit is attempted.

Using paper menus and want a change? Over 90% of our providers are using KidKare which works with any device with an internet connection (phone, tablet, laptop, desktop). Then submit your menus online each month without searching for stamps! The most common response we receive from providers who switch from paper to KidKare state, "I don't know why I didn't switch. It is so much easier." When you are ready to make a change, please call the Illinois Child Care Bureau at 773.444.0115.

If you have already submitted your direct deposit authorization form for a quicker, safer payment method – THANK YOU. If you have not, please call the Illinois Child Care Bureau office today to receive assistance. Direct deposit means that you do not need to wait for the mail to arrive. Your reimbursement will automatically be deposited into your account. The direct deposit authorization form is also available at IllinoisChildren.com under 'resources' tab.

ICCB welcomes **Reyna Almaraz** of Bolingbrook, **Shenique Anderson** of Chicago, **Azila Bledsoe** of Rockford, **Norma Bush** of Chicago, **Mae Green** of Freeport, **Angelic Greene** of Maywood, **Mary Jones** of Calumet City, **Dominique Kennedy** of Aurora, **Ashleigh Martin** of Chicago, **Carissa Ricketts** of Owsego, **Justyna Sobota** of Medinah, and **Krystal Terrell** of Chicago. ICCB welcomes back **Shantel Gibson** of Chicago, **Charlotte Johnson** of Chicago, **Marveline Staten** of Rockford, and **Romella Williams** of Chicago.

The Illinois Child Care Bureau office will be closed:

- Monday, May 25, 2020 in observance of Memorial Day
- Friday, July 3, 2020 in observance of Independence Day

~ Cathy, Kim, Marguerite, and Sarah

A Provider You Should Know

by Kim Klimek, Compliance Manager

For the past 16 years, Ms. Debra Lucas has owned and operated **Debbie's Home Day Care** which is located in Chicago's Gresham neighborhood. Before opening the day care home, Ms. Lucas worked as a CNA (certified nursing assistant) for 10 years. Upon the arrival of her sixth child, Ms. Lucas decided to stay at home to raise her youngest child. She began babysitting for a few children and realized that watching children was her true passion. She began the DCFS licensing process and **Debbie's Home Day Care** was founded.

Ms. Lucas has a group home license and can care for up to 16 children from 6 weeks – 12 years old. She cares for infants and toddlers although she has a few school age children enrolled in her day care home. Typically, the children remain in care at **Debbie's Home Day Care** from 6 weeks through 12 years old.

Ms. Lucas keeps the children busy throughout the day by incorporating age-appropriate activities for each age group. The infants and toddlers work with colorful educational toys focusing on fine motor

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Water – an Important Component of a Healthy Diet

Water makes up about 60% of our body weight and is a precious resource that helps all living things grow – trees, vegetables, and humans. And, all living things must have water to survive, whether they get it from a water fountain, a rain cloud, or a little bottle attached to the side of a hamster cage. With the exception of the polar ice caps, the Great Lakes system is the largest (95,000 square miles) source of fresh surface water in the world and holds approximately 22% of the planet's fresh water. Lake Michigan is the third largest of all the Great Lakes in area, the second largest by volume, and it is the largest body of fresh water entirely within the boundaries of the United States. Furthermore, the Lake Michigan coastline of Illinois is 63 miles long, which is a fraction of the 1,640 miles that make up the total Lake Michigan shoreline. However, despite its small size, the Illinois portion of the Lake Michigan watershed is home to half of the total population of Illinois and the lake itself is the largest public drinking water supply in the state, serving nearly 6.6 million people (of a total of over 10 million lake-wide). This is in addition to being Illinois' largest recreational resource and one of its biggest economic assets. We are

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Go Wash Your Hands

Who has not heard "go wash your hands" from a teacher, a parent, or a day care provider?

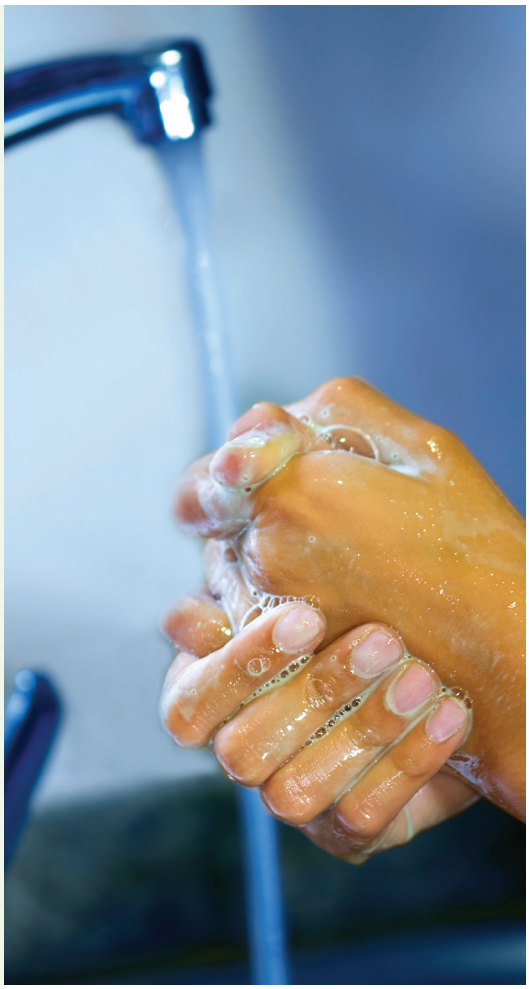
As the caregivers of children, you assume the role of teacher and mentor. Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect the children in your care from getting sick. You can help by demonstrating how and when to wash their hands to get rid of most germs.

As you know, children may need to be reminded to wash their hands:

- Before, during, and after helping you prepare meals and snacks
- Before eating a meal or a snack (Per food program requirements)
- After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the toilet
- After touching an animal or animal feed
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer these 5 steps to washing your hands –

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of the hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds or hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.



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fortunate to have access to this large body of fresh water which is piped into many homes in northern Illinois.

Why water?

We depend on water to survive. Every cell, tissue, and organ in the body needs water daily to help it work properly. Water is in our blood which is how oxygen is transported to all the cells in the body. Water also helps the immune system by keeping the body temperature normal. Water helps our body digest food and get rid of waste. Water lubricates and cushions the joints. Water protects the spinal cord and other sensitive tissues. Water helps clean your mouth which is good for your teeth too. And, water is calorie-free, inexpensive, and readily available.

How much water do we need daily?

Lack of water can lead to dehydration – a serious and sometimes life-threatening issue. There is no single answer to how much water to drink daily because it depends on our age, our body size, and our activity level. If you are active and play sports, you should drink water before, during and after you exercise or play. When it is hot and humid outside, the body needs additional water to keep our temperature normal.

So, ensure water is available daily and encourage children to drink water whenever they are thirsty. Offer the children water when they state they are hungry – sometimes they may confuse hunger and thirst. Encourage the children to drink water between a meal and a snack.

Why not other beverages?

Other beverages such as flavored water, sports drinks, juice, etc contain sugar, sodium, and empty calories. Water hydrates the body and beverages with sugar and sodium can cause you to be thirsty. Milk is another healthy choice.

Although fruits, vegetables, broth, and other beverages contain water, pure water is the best choice. Studies have shown that making water easily accessible to the children daily will increase their intake which leads to better health.

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skills and coordination. Ms. Lucas has found that bright colors keep the infants and toddlers interested and involved in the task at hand. The 3-5 year old children focus on basic learning skills such as letters, numbers, colors, and the days of the week. Ms. Lucas also supplies the children with a lot of arts and crafts. The children love to participate in the arts and crafts activities. Ms. Lucas never pushes a child to participate in any activity. If the child is interested in the activity, then they participate.

Debbie's Home Day Care takes the children on many field trips throughout the year. Two of their favorites places to visit are the Field Museum and Brookfield Zoo. In the summer, the children enjoy water parks as well as Legoland® Discovery Center Chicago. Ms. Lucas enjoys the children's excitement before the field trips and hopes the children will remember these fun experiences. **Debbie's Home Day Care** celebrates birthdays and holidays too. Some of the parents deliver cupcakes or a cake for a child's birthday. Ms. Lucas prefers to offer healthier options for the children. For example, she does not serve juice to the children due to the high sugar content. As a creative substitute, Ms. Lucas adds food coloring to water which entices the children to drink it. In addition, she fulfills her food program responsibilities by serving age-appropriate milk. Candy is not served at parties in her home. The preferred treats are usually animal crackers.

Debbie's Home Day Care is a large open space where the children can explore freely under the close watch of Ms. Lucas and her assistants. The area was designed as an open concept where all the activities are in plain view. There are big windows throughout the day care which bring in lots of natural light and allows the children to see the outside throughout the day. The large back yard furnishes many activities to keep the children busy on warm weather days. There is a swing set, sand table, picnic tables, bikes and many other outdoor toys for the bigger children. There is separate equipment for the little ones to have fun and stay safe. This spring, a professional gardener will be coming to **Debbie's Home Day Care** to teach the children how to plant tomatoes, lettuce, and carrots. Ms. Lucas looks forward to the children learning how to plant a garden, cultivating it and harvesting the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor. She also looks forward to serving the fresh produce to the children.

Ms. Lucas stays on top of current day care information by taking classes, networking with other providers, and utilizing YWCA resources. She is also a member of Hearts of Providers of Illinois, a local day care provider association. Ms. Lucas' preference is to speak to others about the issues facing day care home providers instead of just completing classes.

When choosing recipes for the children, Ms. Lucas considers the cost, the ease of making/serving the item, and whether or not the children will enjoy it. As day care home providers know, meal preparation is time-consuming especially when caring for infants and toddlers. She often purees foods for the infants and young toddlers. She starts working on spoon feeding infants as soon as an infant is developmentally ready. She stated that this is "challenging", however, she knows the importance of teaching the infants how to use utensils. Ms. Lucas also cuts food into small pieces for the toddlers with few teeth, so it is easier for them to properly chew their food. In addition, Ms. Lucas ensures the infants and young toddlers are being served the textures that they can eat without fear of choking. The children's favorite meal at **Debbie's Day Care** is Ms. Lucas' spaghetti. All of the children love it! Their favorite vegetables are peas and carrots.

The most rewarding part of her career is being able to stay home to raise her own children as well as to watch the day care children grow and learn. The most challenging part of her career is the many different personalities. What works for one child, does not always work for another. Ms. Lucas would choose the same career again.

recipes

Eggplant Pizza Snacks

Ingredients

- 2 medium eggplants
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 cup traditional or tomato mushroom jarred pasta sauce
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Spray baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Slice eggplant into ½ inch thick circular slices. Place eggplant on a plate or cutting board and sprinkle with salt.
4. Let sit with salt on top for 20 – 25 minutes. Use a paper towel to remove any excess liquid and salt on the eggplant slices.
5. Spray both sides of prepared eggplant slices with non-stick cooking spray and sprinkle with pepper.
6. Place eggplant slices on baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and flip eggplant slices. Bake for an additional 3 – 5 minutes or until eggplant is tender.
7. Top each eggplant slice with 1 tablespoon pasta sauce. Sprinkle each slice with 1 tablespoon mozzarella cheese.
8. Bake an additional 3 – 4 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Optional: Top with fresh or dried basil or oregano before final baking step.

Note: Recipe can also be made with zucchini squash. Adjust amount of sauce and cheese accordingly depending on size of squash.

Servings: 16 slices (approximately)

Tortilla Cups with Eggs

Ingredients

- 4 6-inch flour tortillas
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup mushrooms, chopped
- ¼ cup bell peppers, chopped
- ¼ tsp black pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Cut each tortilla in half and then in half again. This will result in four equal pieces per tortilla.
3. Spray 6 muffin tin cups with non-stick cooing spray. Overlap 2 – 3 pieces of tortilla in each muffin tin to cover completely and create a cup. Press into muffin tin. Spray with non-stick cooking spray.
4. Bake tortilla cups for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside to cool.
5. Mix eggs, mushrooms, bell peppers and black pepper in a medium mixing bowl.
6. Pour egg mixture equally into tortilla cups.
7. Cook for 20 – 25 minutes or until eggs are cooked through.

Optional: Top with salsa, green onions, or sour cream.

Servings: 1 serving = 2 tortilla cups

Sweet Potato Hash

Ingredients

- 1 TB olive oil
- ½ sweet onion, diced
- 2 lbs sweet potatoes, peeled and diced petitely
- 2 TB water
- 3 large eggs

Instructions

1. Sauté onion in oil until thoroughly softened and then stir in the sweet potato and water.
2. Cover pot and cook on medium high heat for 10 – 15 minutes until the potatoes are cooked.
3. Make 3 cavities with the back of a spoon and crack in the eggs.
4. Cover again, cook 5 minutes until the eggs have set, then scramble them into the potatoes.
5. Serve immediately.

Servings: 9 (ages 1 – 5 years)

For more information on the meal patterns, please visit https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/meal-pattern-training-worksheets-cacfp.

Special thanks to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mayo Clinic, the University of Illinois Extension Program, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and KidsHealth.org.

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